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David Mills, M.P.

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# House of Commons Debates.

SECOND SESSION—SEVENTH PARLIAMENT.

SPEECH OF MR. MILLS, M.P.,

ON

# THE BUDGET.

TUESDAY, MARCH 29TH, 1892.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). Mr. Speaker, it is not my intention to enter into any elaborate discussion or review of the financial statement made by the Minister of Finance. It is clear, I think, to the House, that the hon. gentleman, with the Government, and those who support him and them, have got back upon their old grounds. We have had in the speech of the Minister of Finance, the old music and the old instruments with scarcely any variations. The hon. gentleman has told the House, that the diminution of the deposits in the savings banks are no indication of the diminished prosperity of the country. When the amount in the Government savings banks increased it was an evidence of the increased wealth of the people, and when that amount has diminished it is no evidence of increased poverty or diminished wealth. When the crops of the agricultural population are good it is an indication of the wisdom and care of the Administration, and when the crops of the agriculturists are bad, it is the fault of Providence, and the Administration ought not in any degree to be held responsible. We are told from the Treasury benches, and by the gentlemen who support the ministry, that industries ought to be fostered. They are well fostered in the Province of New Brunswick; they ought to be fostered over the entire Dominion; and we are also told that our commercial relations with the United States have recently enjoyed the fostering care of the Administration. Now, Sir, we are having some new phases in the tactics of the Conservative leaders; we are having a new departure in parliamentary government; we are having new constitutional usages introduced and established, and I suppose before many years elapse, should the hon. gentlemen opposite continue to administer the Government, we will have a complete change in our parliamentary system. It used to be, and it is still in the United Kingdom, the practice under our system of parliamentary government, that the House of Commons, the body which represents the nation, is the most potent council to advise the Sovereign. It is that body which is supposed to exercise a paramount influence over every other

institution in the State. But, Sir, this is no longer the case, so far as the Parliament of Canada is concerned. This Parliament is now supposed to be a mere registering body, to register the wishes of the Administration that may be expressed and acquiesced in, some time before final action is taken, if the Administration finds it convenient, or Parliament may be called upon to sanction, as a matter of form, what has already been finally determined. So far as the prerogatives of the Crown are concerned, we are having, in a large degree, a revival of the doctrine of high prerogative. We are having introduced into this country, in the practice of the Government those notions of prerogative that led to the great civil war in the time of Charles the First, and that were supposed to be altogether overthrown by the revolution of 1688. It is true, Sir, that the hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches, are not claiming these extraordinary powers on behalf of the Sovereign or the Sovereign's representative, but they are claiming them on behalf of that viceroy who exercises authority over the sovereign, and so we are having a parliamentary committee known as the Cabinet or Administration, usurping all these powers that were at one time denied to the Sovereign; usurping them in the name of the Sovereign to be exercised by the Sovereign, always upon the advice of the Government whose advice the Sovereign is not at liberty to disregard. Here, this extraordinary power is actually in the hands of the Administration. It has been exercised by the Administration, and in a way that diminishes the usefulness of Parliament, and seriously affects the interest which the people take in the conduct of the Government of the country. There is nothing, in my opinion, of more importance in the maintenance of our parliamentary system, and in the protection of the community against serious abuses on the part of those in authority, than the maintenance of a healthy public spirit in the community, and that cannot continue to exist when the Government acts without the sanction of the people's representatives; when they intimate to the representatives of the people in Parliament and to the electors

at large, that they may give their mind a holiday, that the Government of the country is in safe hands, that their interests will be properly cared for, and so they need give themselves little or no trouble about the conduct of public affairs. I notice, Sir, that the "new colony," as it has been designated by the Conservative organs, who occupy seats on this side of the House supporting the Administration—I notice that the "new colony" praise the present state of things. They praise the delegation to Washington, not for what they accomplished, but for what they failed to accomplish. There has been a general expression of rejoicing, not because the Government succeeded in doing anything, but because the Government did nothing, and because those who went to Washington came back able to declare that they had not succeeded, and that they did not see before them any prospect of success. They had the wisdom to fail, and by failing to protect the farming population against these calamities, which if they had succeeded, would have inevitably followed from that success. This has been the declaration of nearly every hon. gentleman who has spoken in support of the Administration. One hon. gentleman after another has arisen in the House and declared that reciprocity with the United States in the agricultural products of the two countries, would have resulted in a very serious calamity to the Canadian farmers, and so I have been at a loss to understand why these gentlemen should, under these circumstances, have gone to Washington at all. I am unable to understand why they should have gone there for the purpose of obtaining from the Government of the United States a declaration that they entirely agreed with the Minister of Finance—that they did not see how he was to raise revenue if he succeeded, and that he had better maintain the present condition of things. Why should not these hon. gentlemen who have recently come into Parliament, praise the Administration? They may say to the Government, and to some of the supporters of the Administration in Parliament, and some perhaps out of Parliament, that it is "Thou that hast made us, and not we ourselves, and we are the sheep of thy pasture." These hon. gentlemen sit here by the grace of the Administration, and by the favour of some hon. gentlemen who support the Administration; and there is no doubt that those potent influences which have brought so large a number of recruits to the other side, have proved of inestimable advantage to the hon. gentlemen who have recently obtained seats in this House. The hon. gentlemen who have spoken in support of the Minister of Finance on this subject find it very difficult to spell free trade and non-intercourse in one word. *Punch*, many years ago, represented Mr. Disraeli as a chameleon, on which the words free trade and protection were mixed up together. Now, the Canadian chameleon has not been a very active animal, and there is not much chance of convincing the community that the Government are in favour of reciprocity with our neighbours, and, at the same time opposed to putting the larger number of products, which may be interchanged between the two countries, upon a free list. The hon. gentlemen who have spoken are, no doubt, pleased, for another reason besides that of protecting the farmers against the calamity of having a free market in the United States. They can use their old speeches.

Those speeches, Sir, are not in danger. The visit to Washington has not rendered them absolutely useless, and so far as we can judge from what has been said by the Finance Minister, they may serve a useful purpose to those hon. gentlemen for many sessions to come. At all events, they will, no doubt, serve them as long as the hon. gentlemen who now occupy the Treasury benches, continue to sit there. There is to be no further effort at negotiating a reciprocity treaty with our neighbours across the border. The march has taken place; the capital of the United States has been visited; the attempted negotiations have failed. The Government have convinced themselves, and their supporters, and they have convinced Mr. Blaine and General Foster, that there is no chance whatever of success; and so this whole business is ended, and the Government must remain where they are. They must retain the old policy, they must sing the old tunes, their friends must support the old leaders, and wave the old flag, and that is their business. They are confined within very narrow limits; their work of investigation and reflection is at an end; and all they have to do is to defend the fortress, retain the hon. gentlemen who support them, and use the old arms for the maintenance of the citadel. Well, Sir, I do not exactly see the matter in that light. Whatever may have been the intentions of the Government—and we can hardly suppose now that they were serious or that they ever expected to accomplish more than they did accomplish—it is pretty clear that their friends who followed and supported them, did not take the same comfortable view of the situation, as long as the negotiations were threatened, or were in progress. They felt some uneasiness. They were inclined to think that in some way or other, the hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches had got off the old path, that they were deviating from that course to which the economic orthodoxy of that side of the House required that they should adhere, and that they were in danger of being lost; and they could never understand how it was that those gentlemen should stray so far away from home as to go to Washington to negotiate about a business, which, if it succeeded, would prove so detrimental to the interests of Canada. That was their position. They supposed that some sorceress had got possession of the Finance Minister—that some false Duessa, who had robed herself in garments that did not belong to her and appeared young and beautiful, proved, when stripped of these, to be a very offensive, old, deformed individual, like the false Duessa in the "Fairy Queen." Now, Sir, the hon. gentleman, no doubt, when he started for Washington, played the part of the Red Cross Knight. He got to the White House, which was, his friends feared, a palace of enchantment; but somehow, by the interposition of some friendly fairy, the hon. gentleman was released from his delusions, and became clothed and in his right mind; and he returned without inflicting any serious injury on the people of Canada. That is, in their estimation, the hon. gentleman's position. I remember some years ago reading a play in which the hero, called, I think, Sir Pertinax McSycophant, was anxious to grow suddenly rich, but was puzzled how to succeed unless he found some rich person who would be ready to marry him. So it appeared that he met an old, toothless, phthisicky, rickety, rheumatic specimen of humanity whose affections he won in a fortnight, whom he married in a month

and buried in a year; and then, with a large supply of money, a sorrowful countenance, and a light heart, he was enabled to begin life anew. Now, the hon. gentleman came back here, and I am sure it was a melancholy pleasure to him to tell how he failed. He was very much like Sir Pertinax; and not only did we see the melancholy pleasure with which—no doubt with a melancholy countenance, but with real pleasure at heart—he announced to the House the failure of the negotiations, but, Sir, the pleasure was not a melancholy one to the “new colony,” nor to his older followers. It was perfectly clear from the loud cheers with which the announcement was received, that it was a matter of genuine rejoicing to them. It was a day of emancipation. They were once more free. They could once more, without any limitations or reservations, declare themselves supporters of the old policy to which they had adhered for so very long a time. Now, Sir, there is not only this feature of the discussion, but there is a larger one, if we look at the circumstances which gave rise to this visit to Washington. It is important, in order to understand the whole question, to notice how it began, as well as how it ended. There was a dissolution of Parliament, and this dissolution, we were informed, was for the purpose of obtaining popular sanction to the very serious business in which these gentlemen were about to engage. There was no popular sanction sought by the Government for the Franchise Act. There was no popular sanction sought when it was proposed to put the wards of the Government, the unfranchised Indians of the country, upon the list of voters. There was no popular sanction required when it was proposed to undertake other constitutional changes of not less importance. Sir, Parliament is elected for a period of five years. The law provides for the continuance of Parliament during that period. The law has entrusted the Crown with the power of dissolution, under certain circumstances. What those circumstances are, is pretty well defined by the usages and practices of Parliament and the Crown, in the mother country. It is not a power that can be lightly used. It is a power, says Sir Robert Peel, “which never can be employed carelessly without blunting the instrument.” It is of the first consequence that those usages and practices should be regarded by the Government, when advising the Crown, to dissolve Parliament. I am not going into a discussion of the question whether this was, and in what respect it was, an improper dissolution. I referred to the subject last year. I have no doubt whatever, that the Crown was badly advised, and that the prerogative of dissolution was abused, when that power was exercised in putting an end to the Parliament which preceded this. Honourable gentlemen want popular sanction for negotiations, the character of which was not disclosed. They asked the judgment of the country on a question which the country was not permitted to know and to understand, and they hoped that the people of this country would regard that as a serious declaration of principle. Now, let us look for a moment at what Parliament did in former years, and what it did without question, in putting upon the Statute-book what is called “the standing offer.” There is a law which declared that the Government should at any time, under certain circumstances which are set out in the statute, enter into negotiations with

the United States, and immediately put a large number of articles, indicated in the statute, upon the free list. This Government required popular sanction for what Parliament had authorized it to do. Does the Government require popular sanction for what has already, over and over again, received popular sanction? Most assuredly not; and it can be hardly said that the Administration were serious when they undertook to appeal to the country, and assigned as a reason for that appeal, that they required popular sanction for the step they were about to take. The hon. gentleman, the Minister of Finance, says that the Government are not responsible for the McKinley Bill. Well, I dissent from that view. We all remember here the discussion we had in 1886 when a large number of articles had been put upon the free list by the Congress of the United States, and we asked that they should be put upon the free list by the Parliament of Canada. They were natural products. They were such as a large number of our people had a special interest in, especially those who reside in the Maritime Provinces. A large trade was growing up in them. We were exporters of many of them, yet the Government, at the instance of some of their supporters, voted down the proposition to put these articles on the free list. The financial department of the Government was then in charge of Sir Leonard Tilley. Two years later the Government entered into negotiations with the Government of Washington about another matter, the treaty of 1888, relating to the fisheries. Sir Charles Tupper, who acted as Commissioner for Canada, came here. He was, I think, Minister of Finance at the time. He was, at all events, a member of the Government, and he pressed upon the Government the necessity of putting upon the freelist these articles, that we had proposed should go on the free list two years before. He did so, on representations from Washington. The Government had declared against doing that particular act. The hon. gentleman who now leads the House had himself spoken against the proposition not two days before; but, at the instance of the Minister of Finance, the matter was pressed on the attention of the Government. They receded from the position they had taken, and put those articles on the free list. These articles remained there but for a single season, and were again put back on the list of dutiable articles, and then the McKinley Bill came into operation. Now, the Government for a series of years, acted upon these representations that had been made. What were they? Why, they had said again and again: If you permit us to pursue a courageous policy, we will bring the Congress of the United States to their knees, we will bring them to their senses; and Sir Charles Tupper, as a member of the Administration, pointed out again and again to this House, making a statement which was not accurate, but which was nevertheless made, that the mere threat of putting a duty upon American coal had the effect of inducing Congress to take the duty off Canadian coal. He gave that as an instance of the power Canada had, if she chose to exercise it, of completely altering the fiscal policy of the United States. The Government pursued this system, talking loudly, talking very grandly, intimating what we had power to do, intimating the cowardly, the humiliating position we would be in if we failed to exercise our power, and to show the Congress of the United States our

independence of them. All this tall talk, and these actions ultimately called attention, which was not before attracted, to the relations between Canada and the United States. They specially called the attention of the American Government to the matter, and the result was the McKinley Bill. The McKinley Bill, Sir, had its origin in the policy and in the language employed by the hon. gentlemen who sat on the Treasury benches, and in the newspapers supporting them, and the hon. gentlemen who voted with them and occupied seats behind them in this House. Well, on the eve of the last general election, these hon. gentlemen announced that they were about to negotiate a treaty with the United States. They were divided between their support of a treaty and their support of the National Policy. They were to leave here on the 4th of March, they were to reach Washington on the 6th, at a period when it would be known how great a victory they had achieved, and their hands would be strengthened, so that they could successfully carry on their negotiations with the neighbouring Republic. I think that the correspondence, to which I shall refer, shows that the representations then made were not such representations as ought to have been made to the people of this country; that they were representations made for the purpose of convincing those who were dissatisfied with the policy of protection, that they were about to receive relief at the hands of the Administration; that the relations between the United States and Canada had undergone change; that the Government had abandoned their fiscal policy of restriction, and that they were prepared to treat that policy as a mere means to an end. In fact, we were told again and again, at the last general election, that the policy of protection was not adopted as a policy good in itself but as a means to an end; that their policy, as the resolution of 1878 in fact declared, was simply a means of forcing the people of the United States to agree to freer trade relations, and to freer commercial intercourse, with the people of this country. Now let me call the attention of the House to the correspondence which took place between His Excellency and the Colonial Office, and the Government of this country and the British Embassy at Washington, for the purpose of promoting a better understanding in commercial matters between Canada and the neighbouring Republic. Before commencing to read quotations from this correspondence, let me say that, although the Government sent an embassy to Washington a little later than they had promised the people of this country that such a delegation or embassy would be sent, that delegation or embassy remained there for a remarkably short period of time; it did so because the Secretary of State complained that faith had not been kept with him, and these gentlemen were put on probation for misconduct before those negotiations could be renewed. On the 3rd November, 1890, the Colonial Office informed the Foreign Office that suggestions had been received from the Governor General by telegram, and that a reply to these suggestions should be telegraphed to the British Minister at Washington, if the Foreign Office approved of what the telegram contained. The words are:

"With instructions to consider in what way the wish of Canada to be included in any arrangement may best be made, and to telegraph home for consideration the terms

of any convention or arrangement which he thinks could be obtained or is desirable."

This was done by the Foreign Office on the following day, and on the 6th November the Foreign Office informed the Colonial Office that they had received "the substance of a draft convention from Sir Julian Pannecote that he had privately communicated to Mr. Blaine for an arrangement as to fishing questions and as to trade regulations between the United States and Newfoundland. I am to point out that Sir Julian Pannecote defers replying to the enquiry addressed to him as to the best mode of including Canada in such an arrangement until he has discussed the draft with Mr. Blaine." On the 19th November, a protest is made by the Canadian Government against the Newfoundland treaty. On the 26th November, the Canadian Government was informed by Lord Knutsford that "Her Majesty's Government will delay the Newfoundland convention if Canadian negotiations can be entered upon at once on lines proposed by your Ministers so that both may proceed *pari passu*. Any reciprocity treaty between Canada and the United States would, as previously, be framed so as not to place imports from this country at a disadvantage, and it is presumed that Canada would wish to retain control over her tariff with a view to possible extension of her trade with the colonies and England." There is a suggestion from the Colonial Office in consequence of a communication received from the Government of Canada with reference to the proposals of the Government which have not been laid before this House. What correspondence was there, that gave rise to this suggestion? How is it that that communication of the 19th November from the Government of Canada has not been laid before Parliament? The Governor General informs Lord Knutsford on the same day that "the Canadian Ministers are prepared to open negotiations immediately on the lines indicated in my telegram of the 19th." What were those lines indicated in the telegram of the 19th? Why is it that the contents of that telegram have not been laid before this House, and that the Government have not seen proper to communicate to Parliament the proposal which is necessary, to enable Parliament to form a judgment upon the conduct of the Administration? They go on to say: "Provided their representatives at Washington could be commissioners associated with the British Minister and empowered to negotiate directly instead of being merely delegates." That is the condition on which they proposed to undertake immediate negotiations. What were the lines indicated in that telegram, not a word of which has up to this hour been communicated to Parliament? We are required, on account of the statement of the hon. Minister, to exercise our judgment upon the conduct of the Administration, and the papers which are necessary to enable us to form a judgment upon the conduct of the Administration are not yet laid before Parliament. On the 28th November, 1890, Lord Stanley informs the British Minister at Washington that

"We are prepared to arrange for commercial relations with the United States being liberally extended and wish that the United States may be so informed. This Government objects to sending delegates to Washington unofficially, as liable to give rise to misunderstanding, but is ready at once to open formal negotiations with the sanction of Her Majesty's Government."

They also say:

"They would negotiate immediately on the lines indicated in my telegram of the 19th if their representatives could be commissioners empowered to negotiate directly instead of merely delegates."

These are the words contained in the despatch of His Excellency upon this very important subject. On the 4th December, Lord Knutsford, in a communication to Lord Stanley, says :

"With reference to your despatch of the 19th of last month, Her Majesty's Government agree to the Minister at Washington being assisted by one or more Canadian plenipotentiaries, if the United States consent to negotiations."

On the 5th December, Lord Stanley telegraphs Lord Knutsford :

"May we now make definite official proposals through the British Minister to the United States Government."

That communication shows that up to that time no formal communication, or no proposal, had been made by the Government of Canada to the British Embassy at Washington with the view to its being communicated to the Government of the United States. Their communication which they proposed as a basis of negotiations on the subject of reciprocity, was with the Colonial Office. That is contained in the telegram of the 19th November, which has never been laid before Parliament, but the Colonial Office calls for caution—that they would not undertake to discriminate against British goods, and that they would not enter into such trade relations with the United States as would make it impossible for them to extend their relations with the mother country, or with other British possessions. On the 17th December, Sir Julian Pauncefote writes to Lord Stanley :

"I am informed by the Secretary of State (Mr. Blaine) that his Government could not respond to the suggestion of a formal commission until a basis of arrangement had been first reached. He expresses a strong desire to conclude a wide reciprocity treaty."

These were the words used in the despatch of the British Minister at Washington, that Mr. Blaine desired to conclude a wide treaty of reciprocity. He does not limit the Government to any specific kind of treaty except that it ought to be a treaty mutually beneficial and comprehensive in its provisions. Lord Stanley informs Lord Knutsford, on the 13th December, upon what terms the Government are prepared to negotiate. Now, the fact that that telegram of the 19th is suppressed, and this formal despatch of the 13th December is given, goes to show that the contents of the telegram did not correspond with the contents of the despatch. Let us know what were the Government's first impressions. What were the views, what were the proposals in contemplation as a basis for commercial arrangements with the United States, as suggested in this telegram of the 19th November? The House has a right to know what views the Government entertained on the subject at that time. Now, this despatch of the 13th December reads as follows :—

"I have the honour to send to your Lordship to-day a telegraphic message of which the following is the substance :"

That telegraphic message of the 13th is not here.

"With reference to my telegram of the 10th inst., this Government is desirous to propose a joint commission, such as that of 1871, with authority to deal without limitation and to prepare a treaty respecting the following subjects :—

"1. Renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854, with the modifications required by the altered circumstances of both countries, and with the extensions deemed by the commission to be in the interest of Canada and the United States.

"2. Reconsideration of the treaty of 1888 with respect to the Atlantic fisheries, with the aim of securing the free admission into the United States markets of Canadian fishery products in return for facilities to be granted to the United States fishermen to buy bait and supplies and to tranship cargoes in Canada, all such privileges to be mutual.

"3. Protection of mackerel and other fisheries on the Atlantic Ocean and the inland waters also.

"4. Relaxation of the seaboard coasting laws of the two countries.

"5. Relaxation of the coasting laws of the two countries on the inland waters dividing Canada from the United States.

"6. Mutual salvage and saving of wrecked vessels.

"7. Arrangements for settling boundary between Canada and Alaska."

Now, these were the topics that were suggested in this communication of the 13th December as subjects for discussion in the Parliament of Canada and the Government of the United States. It will be observed that the Government proposed in this, the treaty of 1854 as the basis for negotiation between the two Governments on the subject of reciprocity. The Governments had again and again informed Parliament through a long series of years beginning in 1871, that it was not possible to secure a treaty of reciprocity with the United States upon the basis contained in this first proposition ; and why they should undertake to suggest as a basis for the negotiation that which they themselves stated never could be a basis for a successful treaty, I confess I am unable to understand, except upon the one hypothesis, that, however anxious the Government might be to succeed with regard to some of the other matters, they were merely anxious to allay public feeling, to postpone the public decision, until the elections were over ; and then if they failed, or if it became manifest that they did not desire to succeed in the establishment of reciprocal trade relations with our neighbours, no harm could come to them politically. That is the one inference which may be drawn, and it seems to me the only one that can be drawn, from the proposition, and from what subsequently happened with regard to it. I need not refer to the second proposition. I suppose the Government are anxious to accomplish that. I should have been sorry to have seen them successful with regard to some of the provisions of that treaty of 1888. I am willing that the Administration should go a long way in establishing freer trade relations, and making liberal commercial arrangements in all those matters referred to in the treaty of 1888 ; but I am not anxious, I am not willing, to see any government, or any party, sacrificing the sovereign rights of this country to the demands of our neighbours, and those sovereign rights were, in my opinion, to no inconsiderable degree sacrificed by the terms of the treaty of 1888. I need not refer to the protection of the mackerel, or to the relaxation of the laws relating to the coasting trade. I may say that the proposition relating to mutual salvage and the saving of wrecked vessels, which the Minister of War when Minister of Customs, fought with so much vigour and success for a long series of years, he supported at Washington. I think I may congratulate the Minister of Militia on the progress which he has made in that particular, and that he is now prepared to support, as in the interests of

humanity as well as in the interests of commerce, a policy which he has hitherto opposed with a great deal of vigour and with a great deal of success. Now, the next subject to which I shall refer is a statement made by a member of the Government. It is this :

"Mr. Blaine replied that to endeavour to obtain the appointment of the formal commission to arrive at the reciprocity would be useless, but that the United States Government was willing to discuss the question in private with Sir Julian Pauncefote and one or more delegates from Canada, and to consider every subject as to which there was a hope of agreement on the grounds of mutual interests; if not to risk so grave a step until by private discussion he has satisfied himself that good ground existed for expecting an agreement by means of a commission. He added that he would be prepared to enter into private negotiations at any time after 4th March."

He added that he would be prepared to enter into these negotiations at any time after 4th March. This was the communication the Government received from Washington as to Mr. Blaine's intentions. Mr. Blaine informs Sir Julian Pauncefote :

"I had not a moment to give to the subject until after the adjournment of Congress in March, but after that date I would be willing to respond to your request, to have a full but private conference with the British Minister and one or more agents from Canada to go over every point of difference and consider every subject upon which a mutual interest can be founded. If an agreement is reached, all well; if not, no official mention is to be made of the effort. Above all things it is important to avoid public reference to the matter. This the President will insist upon."

Now, this was the understanding in regard to these initial negotiations. Mr. Blaine said, when he received the proposition which the Government submitted: I am not prepared to enter into negotiations by the appointment of a formal Commission. Your proposition for reciprocity is vague and maybe one exceedingly limited. I do not know how you propose to deal with the matter. I do not know what your proposals are. It may be a useless waste of time to undertake negotiations on such a basis; let us by private and informal intercourse, which is to be kept strictly secret, ascertain whether there is any reasonable prospect of arriving at an agreement before we appoint a Commission for the purpose of negotiation. That was his proposition. And why he wished to keep it secret is perfectly obvious. Such a proposition as the one contained in the topics for negotiations supplied by the Government is one which might arouse against it a very large section of the population of the United States, without bringing a single section to support the Administration that would entertain it. It was important to know more specifically what it was that Canada was willing to agree to have reciprocal trade in, and until that should be ascertained, it was most undesirable that the matter should be put before the people; because the Government of the United States would be in this position: there would be a large number of interests prepared to attack the proposition, and no interests prepared to give it their support. That would be the necessary consequence of making public a proposition such as the Government of Canada submitted to the United States. That was not done. The Government did not keep secret these informal negotiations, on the contrary they published abroad that such negotiations were to be had, and of this Mr. Blaine complained, and he certainly complained with good reason. After that a member of the Government said :

"Sir John Macdonald's Government not long ago made a definite proposal to the Washington authorities for the settlement of all existing differences between the two countries, on the basis of the extension of trade between the two countries. It involves partial reciprocity, the enumerated articles to include generally a number of natural products. But the proposition discards any idea of commercial union or unrestricted reciprocity. Moreover, these proposals were invited and suggested by the Washington authorities."

Did Mr. Blaine's suggestion—that if the subject of reciprocity was entertained it should be a wide proposal for reciprocity—warrant a statement of this sort? In my opinion, it did not. I hold it to be a misrepresentation of Mr. Blaine's statement to say that it warrants the assertion made in the paragraph I have read. It is further said :

"The Commissioners from Canada and Great Britain start for Washington on the 4th March, the date of the opening of the new Congress."

The reason was not that a new Congress was to be opened at that date, but that the Secretary of State would have leisure in consequence of the termination of the old one. There is no statement made by Mr. Blaine that warrants the intimation that negotiations were to begin on the 4th of March, and that a delegation was to start on the 4th March. There is not a particle of the correspondence brought down that warrants a statement of this sort. Mr. Blaine says that before that time he will not have leisure. It is clear that the intention was that the fixing of the date for these negotiations was to be a matter for future arrangement. But that was not one acted upon, nor what was represented to the Canadian public. A Minister said :

"The result of the Canadian elections will be known on the 6th March, the day the Commissioners reach Washington. In order that the Commission may have no uncertain sound, Sir John A. Macdonald has decided to appeal to the country and ask for judgment on these proposals of his to the Washington authorities."

What were these proposals? Was there anything definite, on which judgment could be passed? No. It was necessary that negotiations should take place, that conclusions should be reached, that the public should know what those conclusions were before it would be possible for the public to form a judgment. It should not have been done before negotiations were begun. If the opinion of the country was required, it was required after negotiations were completed, and the terms agreed upon were known, and it was a mere pretense to dissolve Parliament, under the circumstances, for any such purpose as that set out in this statement. It is impossible it could be so. Sir John Macdonald shortly after this time issued an address himself. It was elaborate. It discussed the various issues that had been put before the people. It discussed the policy laid before the country by the party of which he was the head; but there is not in the address from the beginning to the end a syllable with respect to those negotiations that were to take place at Washington. He said nothing in regard to them, and I suppose the reason he said nothing was the understanding with Mr. Blaine that these matters were not to be made subjects of public discussion. Nor was the fact of the discussion of this question in an informal way to be made public, unless they reached a conclusion justifying the appointment of a Commission for the purpose of negotiating a formal treaty. When the statement became public, Mr. Baker, a member of

Congress, addressed a letter to Mr. Blaine, calling Mr. Blaine's attention to what had been stated by the Government or the press of the Government, and asking him what foundation there was for these representations. Mr. Baker's letter is this :

"MY DEAR MR. BLAINE,—It is reported in the newspapers of Canada and along the northern border of my state, where my constituents are deeply interested in the subject, that negotiations are going on between this country and Great Britain, with a view to partial reciprocity with Canada, including natural products only and not manufactures ; and it is stated that Sir Charles Tupper is on his way here as a commissioner to negotiate for such modifications of our tariff. I shall be very glad if you will enable me to answer my constituents.

"Very truly yours,

"CHAS. S. BAKER."

To this Mr. Blaine on the same date, the 29th January, 1891, addressed the following reply :—

"DEAR MR. BAKER,—I authorize you to contradict the rumours you refer to. There are no negotiations whatever on foot for a reciprocity treaty with Canada, and you may be assured that no such scheme for a reciprocity treaty with the Dominion, confined to natural products, will be entertained by this Government. We know nothing of Sir Charles Tupper's coming to Washington.

"Very truly, &c.,

"JAMES G. BLAINE."

Now, Sir, any one who has read the correspondence between the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office, between Lord Stanley and the Colonial Office, between Lord Stanley and the British ambassador at Washington, the minutes of Council, and the communication by the Government of Canada, will see that in every particular this letter of Mr. Blaine is true. There were no negotiations pending. He refused to agree to the appointment of a Commission, he refused to agree that there should be negotiations, until by informal and private conversation with the hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches he had ascertained what their meaning was when they proposed a reciprocity treaty on the basis of that of 1854, modified as required by the changes that had taken place in both countries in that period of time. Mr. Blaine's view was clearly stated in this letter ; and the Government, from the time that letter was written down to the time that they say they failed at Washington in these informal negotiations, knew precisely what kind of proposition the American Government were prepared to entertain. That that proposition must be as broad and as comprehensive as the Finance Minister has stated to this House, I do not believe. I think that a treaty of a very different character, without these restrictions which he suggested, can be negotiated. I think that he did his best to prevent any agreement that his party would be willing to accept. I have no doubt of that whatever, and I say, Sir, that under these circumstances it was of the first consequence that every memorandum, every letter, every communication, every report of matters that took place between the Canadian Government and the Government at Washington, and every report that was made to His Excellency here in reference to this visit to Washington, should have been laid before Parliament before the Minister of Finance undertook to discuss the subject at all. Now, there is in this letter of Mr. Blaine a specific declaration. He declares that no proposition looking to a treaty confined to natural products will be entertained, and the Government knew that before they left Ottawa for Washington. They promised to go to Washington while the general elections were

pending, they left on this final visit of theirs when the bye-elections were pending, and so the Government have, by their action in the first instance and in the last, shown what in their opinion was the public feeling on the subject of reciprocity. Strongly, as they believed, the system of protection had taken hold upon the minds of the manufacturing classes ; strongly as they felt themselves entrenched by their subserviency, shall I say, to that class ; at all events let me say, by their devotion to it ; they still felt that the agricultural population and the commercial classes of this country were interested in freer trade with the neighbouring Republic. It would not do when any number of bye-elections were pending, much less would it do when a general election was pending, to leave the public of this country to suppose that they were not prepared to entertain propositions looking to more liberal trade relations with the United States. On the 6th February last year the Minister of Justice spoke to the people of the city of Toronto, and he said in his speech amongst other things, those which I will now read :

"It will be proved to you when the time comes that in response to that Mr. Blaine, whatever his sentiments may be—and I am bound for the present to give him credit for candor—as the negotiations of Newfoundland would not suit the Dominion of Canada for a trade treaty between these two countries, he was willing to make a wide treaty for reciprocity and enter upon separate negotiations with her. That statement being made, we are bound to avail ourselves of that to extend our trade."

That the United States were willing to make a wide treaty of reciprocity, he knew. That statement was made by Mr. Blaine, and he says we are bound to avail ourselves of that to extend our trade. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I think the Government were bound to avail themselves of it, but the Government in the course which they adopted and in the proposition which they made, showed that they were not disposed to make a wide treaty of reciprocity. It was a treaty of a very different character ; it was a treaty that would require to be characterized by other terms than as a wide treaty of reciprocity, which they expressed their readiness to negotiate ; a treaty the character of which was such that they knew from the time that this proposition was submitted to the British Government to be communicated to Washington, that it would not be accepted. Again the Minister of Justice said :

"The next request from Mr. Blaine was that preparatory to negotiations being entered upon, the Canadian Government would propound a basis upon which the convention would eventually proceed. We did so in a document which has been published in the press offering to consider a renewal of the reciprocity of 1854, with such modifications as the circumstances of the two countries might call for."

Now, Sir, that is a statement which I have no doubt is fairly accurate. Mr. Blaine no doubt insisted upon preparatory negotiations before such a proposition was made, but that proposition when made was of so indefinite and of so vague a character that it prevented the appointment of the Commission until the Government of Canada made clear their meaning, until they explained to the Government of the United States how far they were prepared to go and what modifications they were prepared to propose. The Minister of Justice goes on to say :

"It is stated that having made that proposition to Mr. Blaine without any prospect of its being accepted, and without any prospect of its being eventually entertained, Sir John Macdonald has sprung the elections on the peo-

ple of Canada under the pretence of his going to entertain the negotiations while in reality the Cabinet at Washington will have none of it. Let me tell you that, so far from that being true, we had the proposition that was submitted to Mr. Blaine; that the answer that Mr. Blaine made to us was that he was willing to enter on a preliminary discussion to precede the more formal commission; he was willing to enter upon that discussion and to consider all points embraced in it, but would not be prepared to do so until after the 4th of March."

Now, Sir, the complaint which I make against that statement of the Minister of Justice is, that at the time it was made there was every reasonable ground for supposing that the criticism which he was answering, was a well-founded criticism. What does his critic say? That the Government had made the proposition to Mr. Blaine without any prospect of its being accepted. Now, did they not so make it? Had they any prospect that it would be accepted? Had not Mr. Blaine's refusal to appoint commissioners, his insistence on a preliminary discussion of this proposition, and his letter to Mr. Baker which had already appeared before this speech was delivered—had not all these things made it perfectly clear that the Government were not going to succeed, and that when they sought to persuade the electors of Canada to hold their judgment in suspense until the elections were over, and these negotiations had taken place, they were giving the people of Canada an assurance which they were not warranted in giving them; because there was not any ground whatever for hoping that the Government would succeed in the proposition which it had submitted at the time. The House will bear in mind that these negotiations, which the hon. Minister of Justice discussed so fully and freely in that speech, were negotiations that were to have been kept secret. Whether he felt that they had been already divulged by the Prime Minister and Sir Charles Tupper, and that he was not making matters any worse by further discussion, or not, I do not know; he has never given us any explanation on that point. How was it that the pledge of secrecy was broken, and that these statements, which were to be kept secret, and about which nothing was to be said if there was no success, were fully revealed from the very beginning? Well, Sir, after the elections were over and Parliament met here, the negotiations were made the subject of discussion in the debate on the Address, in which my hon. friend from South Oxford criticised the conduct of the Government in reference to these matters, and his criticism was answered by the Minister of Finance. In the course of his speech the hon. Minister of Finance said:

"Consequently, when there is an alternative, when the Minister of Justice makes a solemn statement in Toronto, when he gives official utterance, speaking as a Minister of the Crown, as to how these negotiations were commenced, and how they were carried on; and on the other hand, there is a letter sent by Mr. Blaine to a Mr. Baker saying some things, and not stating others, the hon. gentleman says: 'I believe Mr. Blaine and not the Minister.' I think, if my hon. friend will allow me to tell him so, it would be well for him to trust the Canadian people a little more, and even to trust the Canadian Ministers when they make grave statements on their responsibilities as Ministers of the Crown."

He further said:

"Is the hon. gentleman afraid of his case? Was he afraid that if he waited three or four days, until these papers came down, that he would not be able to make the speech he has just made, and so decided to forestall the Address and get his surmises spread throughout the country before they could have a chance of being confronted by documentary truth?"

The hon. member for South Oxford would not wait three or four days until those papers were brought down. Well, the House waited three or four months before some of the papers made their appearance, and when they were brought down many papers of the utmost importance to the proper elucidation of the subject were omitted, and to this hour the House is not in possession of them.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. Will the hon. gentleman allow me to ask him whether he did not complain that the telegram of the 19th of November had not been brought down? If so, that is a mistake, because I find it is in the book.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). The hon. gentleman will see, I think, there is just an extract from that telegram, but there is not a syllable referring to the propositions of the Government on this subject.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. There is a reference to the telegram, according to the custom in all diplomatic communications, but there is not an extract, with the exception of half a dozen words.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). On page 75 I find an extract from the telegram of Lord Stanley of Preston to Lord Knutsford, dated 19th November, 1890, as follows:—

"Have received your telegram of 15th inst. My Government view with the utmost alarm proposed convention between Newfoundland and the United States.

"It affects fisheries interests of Canada as well as those of Newfoundland, and places fisheries and other products of Canada on different footing from those of Newfoundland in United States markets.

"Sanction of Newfoundland Treaty by Her Majesty's Government would materially aid United States policy by placing Canada at disadvantage with neighbouring colony of Newfoundland and producing discontent here.

"Dominion Government respectfully remonstrate in strongest terms against signature of proposed convention at Washington. I will telegraph text of Council Minute when received."

On the next page, I find this telegram:

"Canadian Ministers are prepared to open negotiations immediately, on lines indicated in my telegram of the 19th, provided their representatives at Washington can be commissioners associated with British Minister, and empowered to negotiate directly instead of being merely delegates."

Now, the extract from the telegram of the 19th does not allude at all to the negotiations. What I complain of is that that telegram contains proposals as the basis of negotiations, and the British Government in their answer say that they hope the negotiations will not "place imports from this country at a disadvantage, and it is presumed that Canada would wish to retain control over her tariff with a view to possible extension of her trade with the colonies and England." Now, when I take that statement as springing out of the receipt of this telegram, and the other allusion, it is clear that the telegram of the 19th November must have contained proposals relating to the basis of negotiations which are not in the extract published. Now, I have said this much with regard to the papers that are brought down, and the suggestions these papers contain are not fully disclosed. I wish now to discuss the subject of the recent negotiations and what I regard as constitutional usages with reference to the rights of Parliament in respect of papers and documents which have been the outcome of the intercourse between the United States and Canada. There are two things to consider, the rights of the Crown and the rights of Parliament. Now, with regard to the rights of the Crown, every one knows that under our constitutional system the Crown is

the organ of the Government for negotiation with foreign states. Every one knows that the intercourse between Canada and Great Britain and any foreign state is an intercourse had through the instrumentality of the Sovereign, and that every Minister or ambassador speaks in the name of the Sovereign in carrying on these negotiations. Now, the practice is that a record shall be kept and a report made to the Minister of Foreign Affairs as the organ of the Sovereign in this particular, of every transaction and of every discussion which has taken place between any representative of the Government of Great Britain or of Canada and any representative of a foreign state. Then, after such a discussion has taken place, if any parliamentary action is required or any discussion takes place in Parliament, it is the right of Parliament to have before it all these papers which the public interest will permit to be laid before it; and the practice is that if the important documents cannot be laid before Parliament, discussion on that subject shall be postponed. I venture to say that the hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches will not find one instance in a century where such a discussion has taken place in Parliament at the instance of the Minister, without all the papers being put before Parliament. Let me call the attention of the House to an important rule in this particular, and I will first read an extract or two from Mr. Todd's book on Parliamentary Government. Todd says at page 356 of Volume I:

"It is unquestionably of immense advantage to the country, that the diplomatic transactions and proceedings of the Government abroad should be freely communicated to Parliament, for thereby the foreign policy of the Crown ordinarily receives the approbation of Parliament, and is sustained by the strength of an enlightened public opinion. This in itself confers an additional weight to our policy and opinions abroad."

Then, at page 439, he further says:

"The rule which forbids any encroachment by Parliament upon the executive authority of the Crown has a further application, to which our attention must now be directed. It is imperative that Parliament shall be duly informed of everything that may be necessary to explain the policy and proceedings of Government in any part of the Empire, and the fullest information is communicated by Government to both Houses, from time to time, upon all matters of public concern. For it is in Parliament that authoritative statements are made or information given, by Ministers, upon public questions; and no action in Parliament should be based on declarations of policy made elsewhere."

Now it is as much the right of Parliament to know what has passed between any Minister of the Crown and any foreign Government or official, as it is the right of the Crown to know what has passed. This Parliament has a superintending power over the Cabinet. It exercises a supreme authority over the policy and conduct of the Administration. It is entitled to form a judgment upon all proceedings of every department of the Government; and to enable it to discharge that duty intelligently and in the public interest, and not to take a leap in the dark, not to depend wholly upon a statement made by a Minister of the Crown in the House, it is the unquestioned right of Parliament, before it is called upon to discuss any matter of public importance, to have all the papers relating to that subject laid before it for the purpose of enabling it to form an accurate and unbiassed judgment. Let me give to the House a few instances from the practice of the Imperial Parliament, which go to sustain the general proposition I have just stated. I am not stating merely a proposition relating to a rule of procedure

in the House. I am stating a constitutional principle which enables the House to exercise an effective and an intelligent control over the conduct of every officer of the State, and over the conduct of the members of the Administration combined. I am asserting here, in the interests of parliamentary government, the maintenance of a principle, which it is necessary to maintain, to enable the House to discharge its duty in this particular. I am not asking that the House shall undertake the work of the Administration. I am not asking that it shall exercise a meddlesome interference over any Minister in the discharge of his duties in his department, but I am maintaining that the House, as the supreme council of the nation, has supreme authority in advising the Crown on all matters of great public importance, and has a right to overrule every other council of the State in its views; and I am stating what is absolutely necessary to enable it to discharge a duty, which, under the constitution, it is called upon to discharge and which it has a right to discharge. Now let me give you a few instances. I say this, that there is not an instance in which the Government ever initiated a discussion and withheld the papers, in the history of the English Parliament, as far as I know. There are instances where private members have insisted upon discussing a question before all the papers could be brought down, or when it was in the interests of the State that some of the papers should be held back; but when the Government have not laid all the papers on the Table of the House, the House has insisted upon the postponement of the discussion. But for a Minister of the Crown to initiate a discussion upon an important question of public policy, and to inform the House that he will give it no information except what he chooses to give in his speech, is an unprecedented, a most unconstitutional and improper course to pursue, one that would make it, if acted on generally, quite impossible for the House to discharge those high functions it is called upon to discharge as a council of the State.

It being Six o'clock, the Speaker left the Chair.

## After Recess.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). I shall now refer to a few cases which I think will go to establish the general proposition which I laid down, and which I think is supported by the two citations I made from Mr. Todd's very excellent work on Parliamentary Government in England. The first is a short conversation which took place in the House of Lords between certain noble lords on the subject of the aid that had been given by the Government towards the maintenance of the Colonial Government in the Fiji Islands. Viscount Canterbury moved for copies or extracts of any other correspondence or documents explaining the present position of the colony of Fiji. It was stated by him that up to that time there had been only three papers laid before Parliament, and that the necessary information for the consideration of the condition of the colony was not before the House. Lord Kimberley, who had been Colonial Secretary, but whose party was not in office at that time, said the reason assigned for the delay in the preparation of the documents was the pressure of work in the Colonial Office. It would

seem from his statement that application for these documents had been made under a former Administration. Lord Carnarvon said "this only showed the inconvenience of being obliged to speak on a subject without having all the information necessary to render their statements quite accurate." The discussion was a mere incidental discussion as to the importance and necessity of having the documents before the House for the further discussion at a later period, but Lord Carnarvon pointed out that some of the opinions expressed were inaccurate, and that their inaccuracy was due to a lack of the proper information, which went to show the importance of having the information in the hands of members before the subject was made a matter of serious discussion. The next case to which I will refer is a motion which was made for the Berlin memorandum in 1876. That motion was made in the House of Lords by Lord Campbell, in reply to whom Lord Derby, who was then the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, said :

"I hope I shall not be charged with disrespect to this House or discourtesy to any member of it, if I do not in my turn take the opportunity of explaining and justifying in detail the policy which we have pursued."

Further on in the same speech, Lord Derby said :

"There is another reason why a full discussion is not at present possible—it would require as a preliminary, that the papers relating to what is past should be before your Lordships, and that your Lordships should have had time to consider them. The production of these papers, which has often been promised, has been unavoidably delayed ; but they shall be laid before Parliament during the present session and in time for a full discussion of them, if such discussion be thought desirable. But to lay them at the present moment on the Table would be premature and inconvenient ; and moreover, they could only be produced in a very fragmentary form."

There were two reasons assigned for not proceeding with the discussion to which the papers related. The one was that the House had not all the papers and correspondence in its possession which would enable it to discuss the matter intelligently, and the second was that, these papers being largely correspondence with foreign Governments, the Administration were not in a position to lay them before Parliament. You will observe, Mr. Speaker, that this discussion, incidental and brief as it was, was not initiated by the Administration but by private members of the House, who asked for the papers in order that a full discussion should be had ; and that it was stated that these papers were essential to a discussion of the matter ; that the Minister admitted that, and also that the duty devolved upon him to bring down these papers. Then, in another case that took place in the same year, 1876, Mr. Bruce, who was subsequently a member of the Administration, and who was at that time a prominent member of the House, asked Mr. Disraeli, who was the leader of the House of Commons at the time, "Whether he can fix a day for the discussion of the motion upon the affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina." This motion had reference to the contemplated acquisition of these two provinces, which had previously been part of the Turkish Empire, by the Empire of Austria, and these papers were asked for in order to have an intelligent discussion on that subject. In reply to Mr. Bruce, Mr. Disraeli said :

"I quite recognize that my hon. friend has a *locus standi* in this question in the notice he has previously given ; and assuming as a matter of course that there will be a discussion on the subject even if there may not be one which in-

volves the opinion of the House by a formal motion, I should, under those circumstances, recognize the claim of my hon. friend and endeavour to meet his convenience. But until the papers are on the Table, I think I should hardly do justice to the feelings of the House if I made any arrangements for the discussion of a question of such an important character by a private member.

The reason given for not fixing a day for the discussion of the question was that the papers had not yet been brought down. Upon the motion that the papers on the Eastern question should be laid on the Table of the House, Mr. Disraeli said :

"All those papers are public records of the feelings, policy and views of the different countries, and can always be produced ; but in course of negotiations of this kind, there are confidential communications made by foreign powers, and it is very often highly necessary for the vindication of our course, and as illustrative of our policy that those documents should be published ; but the House will see at once that the ancient custom which has always been observed, of consulting foreign powers before confidential communications on their part are laid before Parliament, is a very proper and very wise one. The House will feel that otherwise there would be an end to all confidential intercourse with any foreign power. When we are told that all the Government has to do is to consult the House of Commons, and not under any circumstances to consult those who are our allies, the only consequence of such a policy would be that all the papers we could lay on the Table would be documents which the House would soon find were wanting in light and information on many points of the most interesting character."

Here Mr. Disraeli points out in the first place that a full presentation of the papers may be necessary to a full consideration of the conduct of the Government and to a justification of the views of the Government on an important matter of international concern. But he also points out that before these papers can be laid upon the Table, some of which were of a confidential character, the consent of the foreign Government, with whom that communication was had, should be obtained ; because if a Government were to assume, without such consent, the right to lay papers, under all circumstances, before the House of Commons, a Government would be extremely cautious as to what its public documents would contain. It might be driven to carry on, by private and unofficial communication, through private or unofficial channels, that highly confidential correspondence that is, under present practice, found in the papers of a public character. Now, in so far as any correspondence of this kind may be immature, as the question has not yet been finally disposed of, the Government may find it in the public interest to withhold these papers. But the Government that does so must also find it in the public interest, so far as it is concerned, to take care not to initiate a discussion upon the subject. When they ask the House to consider their conduct, and to pass it in review, commenting upon or approving of the course they have taken, they are bound to put the House in possession of all these documents, and all that information which is necessary to enable the House to form a proper judgment. Now, what I complain of in this case is that the Minister of Finance introduced into his speech a discussion of communications of an informal character that had taken place with the Government at Washington, a correspondence which was of the highest importance to the people of this country. The hon. Minister has made a statement to the House ; he has told us what passed in a very imperfect manner, but he has withheld from the House all those papers, all the memoranda, all the notes, or protocols, if any were kept, of the communications that were had, and he gives us no opportunity, except

in so far as his speech gives it, of forming an opinion for ourselves. I say that it is treating the House in a highly improper manner, it is treating it with the greatest possible indignity. The Administration sit on these benches and hold their official position with the sanction of this House. Their continuance in office is due to the goodwill and confidence of the House, but that confidence should be a rational confidence, and not a superstition. They deny to the House an opportunity of coming to a rational conclusion when they withhold from us that information which is necessary to enable the House to judge properly for itself. Let me mention another case. When Sir Austin Layard, in 1853, proposed to discuss the invasion of Turkey by Russia, and moved for the papers, Lord Palmerston stated on that occasion that it would be highly inconvenient to lay those papers before Parliament, and as the papers could not be laid before Parliament, it would be very improper to call upon the House to discuss the subject; that the House, before that discussion took place, ought to be in possession of all the facts, and that it would not be in the public interest to carry on such a discussion in the absence of the necessary material by which a proper conclusion upon the subject could be reached. This was the statement made on that occasion by one of the first parliamentarians of the country, by one who was conversant with the constitutional rights of Parliament and with the constitutional rights of the Administration, as any man who has, in our day, sat in the English House of Commons. Sir, I do not know that I could quote to the House a higher authority than the one to which I have just referred. Lord Palmerston held the office of Foreign Secretary in the United Kingdom for nearly half a century. At a later period, in 1878, during the Russo-Turkish War, the Eastern Question was again discussed, and the Earl of Granville on that occasion moved for certain papers and public documents, and I will read a sentence or two from a very brief speech he made on that occasion, and the answer that was given by Lord Beaconsfield :

“EARL GRANVILLE—I am quite sure Her Majesty would not desire that a matter of such great importance should be considered without the fullest information having been afforded to the House.”

And again :

“I should be glad to know when those papers will be in the hands of members of this House? I also wish to know whether the correspondence will include, besides the correspondence between this country and Russia, the correspondence with the other powers?”

“LORD BEACONSFIELD—They will not be limited to the correspondence between this country and Russia, but will contain papers relating to the proposition of the Congress by Austria.”

Lord Beaconsfield proposed that Monday week should be a day for the consideration of this message.

“EARL GRANVILLE—I think that will depend entirely on the papers which, I understand from the noble Earl, will not be confined to the papers between this country and Russia; but will include also those between this country and Austria. I think we have a right to know the views of all the great Powers with regard to whether there should be a conference or not.

“LORD BEACONSFIELD—I shall not fix the day for the discussion till Monday.”

Now, these papers were to come down immediately, and it was not until after the papers were in the hands of the House that the Government proposed to fix a day for the consideration of the subject to

which the papers alluded. Is that the way in which the House was treated on this occasion? Not at all. Here the Administration informed the House last year, it informed the country again and again that there was to be an unofficial discussion on the subject of reciprocity with the Government of the United States. That unofficial discussion has taken place. The correspondence, the papers that the Government submitted—which I will undertake to show must, in the nature of things, be very important—have not yet been brought down. Sir, the Minister in his speech, if he wished the House to consider this subject, ought to have stated when these papers would have been brought down, when the House would be put in full possession of everything that was in the possession of the Administration; and after he had put the House in full possession of these papers and this correspondence, he might then have asked the House to fix a day, or have proposed himself a time when the subject should be taken into consideration. But to propose a discussion on the subject, to undertake to tell the House what the Government thought, what certain members of the Government said to the Government at Washington, and to declare that the subject now is put at rest forever, is to treat the House, I say, with the greatest possible indignity. The hon. Minister has not dealt fairly and frankly with the House; he has not given to the House that consideration to which it is entitled, when he withheld the papers and proposed himself to remain the master of the situation. Sir, I need not cite any further authorities than those which I have already cited. They are sufficient to illustrate the principle which I laid down before we rose at six o'clock, which was confirmed by Mr. Todd, and which is abundantly supported by these authorities. I say that the rule is clear, that it is a highly improper proceeding for Ministers to initiate a discussion in Parliament upon a subject, and at the same time to withhold papers relating to that subject, from Parliament. Let me say again, there is a difference in this respect between a Minister and a private member. If a private member, in face of the fact that the House has not been put in possession of the papers, and against the remonstrance of the Administration, insists upon a discussion, he may express his opinion upon the subject. But the House is not bound to go on with the discussion. It is, however, altogether different with a Minister of the Crown. The information is in his possession, and he must act upon the well-settled principle that the House is never ready for discussion until the Government are ready to lay before the House the papers which are necessary to enable it to come to an intelligent conclusion. The House ought to be in possession of all the information of which the Government are possessed; it ought to have the same opportunity to form its judgment which the Government has, because the members of the Government for all these purposes do not in any respect differ so far as their rights are concerned from any other members of Parliament. It is the right of every hon. member, before he is called upon to vote or to discuss a question of this sort, to have in his possession the material which will enable him to form a proper judgment upon the subject. Sir, I have already alluded to the fact that the Minister of Finance, and I may now say also the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, exhibited

no little pleasure in referring to the circumstance that they had failed. The Minister of Marine and Fisheries said that the failure would be satisfactory to the business men of the country; the question was disposed of, in fact it was now put out of the purview of practical politics, and the country might have some rest. Let me, having said this much with respect to the constitutional question that has been raised by the course which the Minister of Finance has pursued, say a word or two with respect to the negotiations as they are disclosed to the House in the speech which the hon. Minister addressed to it. He said that reciprocity on the lines offered by Mr. Blaine would necessitate discrimination against the importations and products of the mother country. I am not here going to contest that proposition. I shall be better prepared to discuss it when I have at my disposal the same material the Minister himself has. But I wish to call attention to this fact, that the Government have long proposed, and this Parliament has long sanctioned, a policy of discrimination against the United Kingdom. The taxes on the products of the United Kingdom are discriminatory. The Government do not place the industries of the mother country upon the same footing as those of some other countries. Let me remind the Government of this fact that, when the products of one country are free and we tax the products of another country, it is not necessary that those products should be of the same kind in order that the taxes should be discriminatory, in favour of one country as against the other. Does not the hon. gentleman know that when he imports tea and coffee free, that when he exempts them from taxation altogether, he obliges other imports to bear larger taxes or on such of them as are the subject of taxation? Does he not know that he is discriminating against the United Kingdom and in favour of the countries where tea and coffee are produced? Can there be any doubt on that subject? Does he not know that he seriously affects, by the amount of free importations the imports of the country which are subject to taxation? Has not Spain over and over again complained that Spanish wines are subjected to a higher tax than the wines of France, and is it any reply that the wines produced in Spain are of a different character from those produced in France? There is discrimination. The whole policy of taxation is policy based on the self interest of the Government that imposes it, and it can only be justified on the ground that it is in the interest of the people in whose behalf it is imposed. There is not a country in the world, so far as I know, that places all countries on an exact footing of equality. The products of some are admitted without taxation, and the products of some are highly taxed. And the fact that they are different does not alter or change the principle; the fact that one commodity is taxed and the other is free makes the tax discriminatory as much as if we received the articles from exactly the same countries. In another respect it is discriminatory. Take, for instance, woollen products. Sir Francis Hincks years ago showed that the tax on woollen products of England were higher than the tax on similar products of the United States. We tax certain articles according to weight, and specifically, and also *ad valorem*, and when taken together the tax on horse blankets is very much higher than the tax on broadcloth, in proportion to their value. So it is in regard to some other

articles. The whole system of taxation is unequal, and as Sir Francis Hincks showed the few blankets imported from the United States paid in proportion to their value a far lower rate of taxation than corresponding articles from the United Kingdom, because they belonged to a different class. But the whole system of specific taxes will make it discriminatory and such as exists at this moment, and it is against the products of the United Kingdom. The Minister of Finance said there could not be a treaty of reciprocity with the United States on the part of Canada unless it was a discriminatory tariff against Great Britain. What evidence does the hon. gentleman submit to us? Recently the Americans made a treaty with the West Indies. It is not discriminatory. They had concluded a treaty which the hon. gentleman succeeded in defeating, with Newfoundland. That was not discriminatory. I am not prepared to admit that any treaty which does not discriminate against Great Britain cannot be made with the United States. I am satisfied that the negotiations, if carried on by hon. gentlemen who were anxious for a treaty, instead of hon. gentlemen who in all their speeches have pronounced themselves against a treaty, whose supporters in this House since the financial speech was made by the Minister of Finance, have, without an exception, spoken against a treaty of reciprocity, show the spirit by which the party of hon. gentlemen opposite are actuated, and the spirit in which those hon. gentlemen journeyed to Washington for the purpose of carrying on those negotiations with the United States would have resulted differently. I think a fair treaty is a possibility. I think that we have before us up to this time no evidence that this subject was fully, exhaustively and adequately considered by hon. gentlemen opposite in their intercourse with Mr. Blaine. Let me say this, that some preparation for the proper discussion of this subject is necessary, some consideration of the facts, some careful analysis of the trade between the two countries, some estimate of the possibility of an increase in consequence of the change which the Government proposes. One of the statements made by the hon. gentlemen was that Mr. Blaine said that a treaty of reciprocity confined to natural products could not have in it any of the elements of mutuality in reciprocity. What evidence is there of that? What answer did the hon. gentlemen make to that statement? What document or memorandum did they prepare when they went to propose a treaty of reciprocity in natural products; what argument did they advance for the purpose of upholding that proposition? How is it, that this is not before Parliament before this question was made a subject of discussion? When I look at our Trade and Navigation Returns I find that there have been imported from the United States into Canada last year \$24,000,000 worth of products that were not subject to taxation at all. How much do we send to the United States free from taxation at this moment? How much of that \$24,000,000 worth are natural products, and what would be the volume of trade between the two countries under a system of free trade in natural products? If the hon. gentlemen went to Washington to make a proposition to the Government of the United States, and they proposed to confine reciprocity to natural products, I suppose they went there prepared to show that that propo-

sition was a fair one to the United States. The hon. gentleman told us that Mr. Blaine said it was unfair, but the hon. gentleman did not give to the House a single statement to show that he contended the contrary. He does not lay before the House any memorandum of facts by which the offer is justified and by which an attempt is made to show that it is a fair and proper offer. Now, Sir, it seems to me that the Government ought to have come to the House prepared to submit to the House all the data by which they had fortified themselves, before they set out on their journey to the southern capital. Why is it not in our possession? Why do not the Government give us an opportunity of seeing how far they acted earnestly and in good faith, or how far they sacrificed the interests of the agricultural and labouring population of this country to a few persons engaged in manufacturing, whose confidence the Government have so unremittently enjoyed? It seems to me that it is clear that the House has not been properly dealt with in this matter, and that the course taken by the Government is not usual and is not constitutional. I believe that the House is entitled to full information, and that everything that the Government had in their possession by which they undertook to sustain the propositions which they made to the Government of the United States, and the answers which they received from the Government of the United States should have been at this moment in our hands, and until they were prepared to put these papers in our hands they ought to have abstained from initiating any discussion upon this subject. Sir, I have stated already that I know a number of gentlemen in this House, some of whom are here for the first time, some, after an interval of absence from the House, who refer to the result of these bye-elections as an evidence that the country supports the policy which the Government have pursued. But, Sir, what is that policy? Is it the policy that the Government intended to pursue, or that they sought to persuade the country that they intended to pursue, when they set out on this journey to Washington, or is it the old National Policy, and when a member of the Government told this House, that no greater disaster could befall this country than to permit the free importation of foreign products of the

United States, and that reciprocity in natural products would be a calamity; and when that calamity was one of the things which the Government by these negotiations, if they were in earnest, intended to inflict on the country? Was it protection or reciprocity upon which the recent elections turned; which was it that these gentlemen supported? Did they support the Government in undertaking to negotiate a reciprocity treaty, or did they support the Government in opposing negotiations and undertaking to secure the defeat of that treaty? What were the views that these hon. gentlemen were elected to uphold in this House? Now, Sir, I have said that there were potent influences other than those of the popularity of the measures of the Administration which were not without their effect in the elections which have taken place. Let me read a letter which has recently appeared in some of the newspapers. This letter is addressed from St. Mary's by a Mr. Ingram, of St. Thomas, to a gentleman in that city. It says:

"DEAR SIR,—Your telegram to hand this afternoon and am glad to hear from you. Things were quite dull until to-night, and mayhap to-morrow it may be all O.K. Hold yourself in readiness at any time. I will write you when to come if O.K.; if not, I will write you 'no good.' Mr. R. Ber. is not here yet; keep patient.

"Yours in haste,

"W. H. INGRAM."

I suppose most hon. gentlemen will understand the significance of a communication of that sort, and that it means a good deal, I have no doubt. I draw my inferences, and every hon. gentleman in the House can do the same thing. But, Sir, I am of the opinion that the protective policy of the Administration enjoys, to-day, in no degree, a greater measure of public confidence or a greater degree of popularity than it did when the general elections took place in March last.

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